

INVERNESS COURIER - AUGUST 12, 2008

GEORDIE - 1 August 2008

Scottish Youth Theatre's adaptation of David Walker's "Geordie" as a full-scale musical will not go down as one of their finest hours, but the colourful show did have its moments.

With a cast of 30 or so youngsters in an age range of 14 to 21, director Mary McCluskey has her work cut out in staging the show, but did so with her usual stylish aplomb.

The Musical adaptation of Walker's sentimental tale of a Highland boy who turns from the school weakling into an Olympic athlete after buying a body-building course from one Henry Sampson (well played by Sandy Howe, resplendent in leopard-skin leotard) after seeing a British version of those Charles Atlas ads many readers of a certain age will remember from their youthful comic reading.

The comic-style stage sets and period costumes evoked a pre-World War II era in imaginative fashion (although a reference to bebop in one of the songs after the action moves to New York predates the existence of the world and the music by some years). Stuart Thomas's music was distinctly uninspiring, however, especially when performed in rather half-hearted fashion on keyboard only.

The young cast gave it their best shot. The principals, Philip Napier as Geordie and Ellis-Eve Barrington as his village sweetheart, Jean, were supported by Euan Patterson and Anna Plasberg-Hill as their youngster selves.

Noteworthy cameos came from Alasdair Hankinson as the Reverend McNab and Rosie Cosgrove as the snippy Mistress Robertson (a portrayal indebted to Karen Dunbar.)

Musical comedy is a particularly hard nut to crack for a young cast, and they deserve credit for their effort. The singing was patchy, but no one could be faulted for either commitment or application, and some of the big ensemble song and dance set-pieces came off very well, as did some of adapter David Cosgrove's jokes.